Box Patent Application
Commissioner of Patents
and Trademarks
Washington, DC 20231

NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

Transmitted herewith for filing is the patent application of

Inventor(s): Ruvolo et al.

WARNING:Patent must be applied for in the name(s) of all of the actual inventor(s) 37 CFR 1 41(a) and 1.53(b)

For (title): System and Method for Renewing Business, Professional and Personal Contacts

1. Type of Application

This new application is for a(n) (check one applicable item below):

_X_ Utility

___ Design

___ Plant

NOTE. If one of the following 3 items apply them complete and attach ADDED PAGES FOR NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL WHERE BENEFIT OF A PRIOR U S APPLICATION CLAIMED and a NOTIFICATION IN PARENT APPLICATION OF THE FILING OF THIS CONTINUATION APPLICATION

___ Divisional

___ Continuation

___ Continuation-in-part (CIP)

2. Benefit of Prior U.S. Application(s) (35 USC 120)

NOTE· If the new application being transmitted is a divisional, continuation or a continuation-in-part of a parent case, or where the parent case is an International Application which designated the U S , then check the following item and complete and attach ADDED PAGES FOR NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL WHERE BENEFIT OF PRIOR U.S APPLICATION(S) CLAIMED

___ The new application being transmitted claims the benefit of prior U.S. application(s) and enclosed are ADDED PAGES FOR NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL WHERE BENEFIT OF PRIOR U.S. APPLICATION(S) CLAIMED.

3. Papers Enclosed Which Are Required For Filing Date Under 37 CFR 1.53(b) (Regular) or 37 CFR 1.153 (Design) Application

_14_ Pages of Specification and Abstract

_10_ Pages of Claims

_3_ Sheets of drawing

_X_ Formal

___ Informal

NOTE: "Identifying indicia such as the serial number, group and unit, title of the invention, attorney's docket number, inventor's name, number of sheets, etc , not to exceed 2 3/4 inches (7 0cm in width may be placed in a centered location between the side edges within three fourths inch (19 1mm) of the top edge. Either this marking technique on the front of the drawing or the placement, although not preferred, of this information and the title of the invention on the back of the drawings is acceptable " Proposed 37 CFR 1.84(1) Notice of March 9, 1988 (1090 O.G 57-62).

4. Additional Papers Enclosed

___ Preliminary Amendment

_X_ Information Disclosure Statement (37 CFR 1.98)

_X_ Form PTO-1449

_X_ Citations (2 References)

___ Declaration of Biological Deposit

___ Submission of "Sequence Listing," computer readable copy and/or amendment pertaining thereto for biotechnology invention containing nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence.

___ Authorization of Attorney(s) to Accept and Follow Instructions from Representative

___ Special Comments

___ Other

5. Declaration or Oath

_X_ Enclosed
executed by (check all applicable boxes)

_X_ inventor(s).

___ legal representative of inventor(s). 37 CFR 1.42 or 1.43

___ joint inventor or person showing a proprietary interest on behalf of inventor who refused to sign or cannot be reached.

___ this is the petition required by 37 CFR 1.47 and the statement required by 37 CFR 1.47 is also attached. See Item 13 below for fee.

___ Not Enclosed

___ Application is made by a person authorized under 37 CFR 1.41(c) on behalf of all the above named inventor(s). (The declaration or oath, along with the surcharge required by 37 CFR 1.16(e) can be filed subsequently).

NOTE It is important that all the correct inventor(s) are named for filing under 37 CFR 1 41(c) and 1.53(b)

___ Showing that the filing is authorized. (Not required unless called into question. 37 CFR 1.41(d).

6. Inventorship Statement

WARNING: If the named inventors are each not the inventors of all the claims an explanation, including the ownership of the various claims at the time the **last** claimed invention was made, should be submitted.

The Inventorship for all the claims in this application are:

_X_ the same

or

___ are not the same. An explanation, including the ownership of the various claims at the time the last claimed invention was made.

___ is submitted

___ will be submitted

7. Language

_X_ English

___ non-English

___ The attached translation is a verified translation. 37 CFR 1.52(d).

8. Assignment

_X_ An assignment of the invention to International Business Machines Corporation

_X_ is attached. A separate

_X_ "COVER SHEET FOR ASSIGNMENT (DOCUMENT) ACCOMPANYING NEW PATENT APPLICATION" or

___ FORM PTO 1595 is also attached.

___ will follow.

NOTE "If an assignment is submitted with a new application, send two separate letters-one for the application and one for the assignment " Notice of May 4, 1990 (1114 O G. 77-78)

9. Certified Copy (35 USC 119)

Certified copy(ies) of application(s):

(country)	(appln. no.)	(filed)
(country)	(appln. no)	(filed)

from which priority is claimed

___ is/are attached.

___ will follow.

10. Fee Calculation (37 CFR 1.16)

A. X Regular application

CLAIMS AS FILED						
Number filed			**Num. Extra**		**Rate**	**Basic Fee $690.00**
Total Claims	**37**	**-20=**	17	**X**	**$18.00**	**$306.00**
Independent Claims	**3**	**-3=**	0	**X**	**$78.00**	**$0.00**
Multiple dependent claim(s), if any	0				**$260.00**	**$0.00**

___ Amendment canceling extra claims enclosed.

___ Amendment deleting multiple dependencies enclosed.

___ Fee for extra claims is not being paid at this time.

NOTE: If the fees for extra claims are not paid on filing, they must be paid or the claims cancelled by amendment, prior to the expiration of the time period set for response by the Patent and Trademark Office in any notice of fee deficiency. 37 CFR 1 16(d)

Filing Fee Calculation $ 996.00

B. ___ Design application
($310.00--37 CFR 1.16(f))
Filing Fee Calculation $_____

C. ___ Plant application
($480.00--37 CFR 1.16(g))
Filing Fee Calculation $_____

11. Small Entity Statement(s)

___ Verified Statement(s) that this is a filing by a small entity under 37 CFR 1.9 and 1.27 is/are attached.

Filing Fee Calculation (50% of A, B or C above) $_____

12. Request for International-Type Search (complete, if applicable)

___ Please prepare an international-type search report for this application at the time when national examination on the merits takes place.

13. Fee Payment Being Made At This Time

___ Not Enclosed

___ No filing fee is to be paid at this time. (This and the surcharge required by 37 CFR 1.16(e) can be paid subsequently.)

_X_ Enclosed

_X_	basic filing fee	$ 996.00
_X_	recording assignment ($40.00; 37 CFR 1.21(h))	$ 40.00
___	petition fee for filing by other than all the inventors or person on behalf of the inventor where inventor refused to sign or cannot be reached. ($130.00; 37 CFR 1.47 and 1.17(h))	$_____
___	for processing an application with a specification in a non-English language. ($130.00; 37 CFR 1.52(d) and 1.17(k))	$_____
___	processing and retention fee ($130.00; 37 CFR 1.53(d) and 1.21(l))	$_____
___	fee for international-type search report ($40.00; 37 CFR 1.21(e))	$_____
	Total fees enclosed	**$ 1,036.00**

14. Method of Payment of Fees

_X_ Check in the amount of $ 1,036.00.

___ Charge Account No. 12-0010 in the amount of $_____. A duplicate of this transmittal is attached.

NOTE. Fees should be itemized in such a manner that it is clear for which purpose the fees are paid

15. Authorization to Charge Additional Fees

WARNING If no fees are to be paid on filing, the following items should not be completed

WARNING Accurately count claims, especially multiple dependent claims, to avoid unexpected high charges, if extra claim charges are authorized.

X The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the following additional fees by this paper and during the entire pendency of this application to Account No. 12-0010 :

___ 37 CFR 1.16(a), (f) or (g) (filing fees)

___ 37 CFR 1.16(b), (c) or (d) (presentation of extra claims)

X **Any deficiencies in the fees provided.**

NOTE. Because additional fees for excess or multiple dependent claims not paid on filing or on later presentation must only be paid or these claims cancelled by amendment prior to the expiration of the time period set for response by the PTO in any notice of fee deficiency, it might be best not to authorize the PTO to charge additional fees, except possibly when dealing with amendments after final action

___ 37 CFR 1.16(e) (surcharge for filing the basic filing fee and/or declaration on a date later than the filing date of the application.)

___ 37 CFR 1.17 (application processing fees)

___ 37 CFR 1.18 (issue fee at or before mailing of Notice of Allowance, pursuant to 37 CFR 1.311(b)).

16. Instruction As To Overpayment

X credit Account No. 12-0010

___ refund

Reg. No. 34,368
Tel. No. (703) 415-1015

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT'S REPRESENTATIVE
Randy W. Lacasse

Lacasse & Associates
2001 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Suite 806
Arlington, VA 22202

X **Incorporation by reference of added pages**

Check the following item if the application in this transmittal claims the benefit of prior U.S. application(s) (including an international application entering the U.S. stage as a continuation, divisional or C-I-P application) and complete and attach the ADDED PAGES FOR NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL WHERE BENEFIT OF PRIOR U.S. APPLICATION(S) CLAIMED.

___ Plus added pages for new application transmittal where benefit of prior U.S. application(s) claimed.

Number of pages added _____

X Plus added pages for papers referred to in Item 4 above

Number of pages added 2 PAGES AND 2 REFERENCES

X Plus "Assignment Cover Letter Accompanying New Application"

Number of pages added 1 PAGE

___ **Statement Where No Further Pages Added**

AM9-99-0133

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT

INVENTOR:

Joann Ruvolo
Stefan Edlund
Daniel Ford

TITLE:

System and Method for Renewing Business, Professional, and Personal Contacts

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of Invention

The present invention relates to a system and method for renewing business, professional and personal contacts. More particularly, the present invention is related to a system and method for automatically selecting whom a user should keep in touch with and displaying such selections to the user.

Discussion of Prior Art

Remembering anniversaries, birthdays, meetings, bill-payment, special occasions or other important dates or events can become a large task when you have a busy schedule. Typically, people are in a constant state of catch up; there are always more demands than free time. Yet when there is free time, it gets idled away. One of the first things to get squeezed out of people's time is other people (e.g. business, professional and personal contacts). For example, people frequently fail to follow up on business accounts that went to their competitors. Or, when was the last time an individual saw colleagues from their university, acquaintances from prior years conventions, friends from previous projects or jobs? Or, when was the last time the individual invited their neighbors over for dinner or followed up on a Christmas card?

From a professional, personal, and/or business stand point, the cost to an individual and their company is tremendous. An individual is most effective when they are connected or networked. Contacts that were previously made could be the source of new accounts, new sales, new job applicants, new ideas, the latest in research, joint projects, etc. The cost is also tremendous at a

personal level, since their social net is what sustains and nurtures them.

A number of systems have been developed for maintaining and organizing communication with business contacts. For example, U.S. Patent No. 5,831,611, issued to Kennedy et al., discloses a process management system that includes a graphical process editor facilitating the creation of communication processes by a programmer on a graphical user interface. This patent presents relationships between the various conditionally executed events that are graphically represented to the programmer of the communication process while the programmer is creating or modifying the communication process. Events selection procedures conditionally direct the flow of execution by the process manager to one of the attached child events of the event selection procedures. In cases where processing the child event is conditioned upon the completion of the parent event, the child event may be delayed until the parent event is completed. However, this patent makes no mention of displaying a candidate's image to the user in order for the user to make contact, nor does it dynamically present possible contacts.

U.S. Patent No. 5,737,726 issued to Cameron et al., discloses a contact management system that aids customer service representatives in providing service to customers in connection with products, information, and services. The management system stores customer relationship information and business events related to a customer. However, this patent is not used as a reminder service, nor does it display images of candidates to be contacted.

The prior art fails to provide an ongoing system and method for automatically selecting from a contact list whom a user should keep in touch with and display such selection(s) to the user. The user is presented with an image of a business associate, professional contact, and/or friend/family. Seeing that image reminds the user of how long it has been since they last met. The user then selects (e.g. clicks with a computer mouse) the image of the displayed candidate to make contact. Furthermore, the system dynamically presents possible contacts to the user. The prior art fails to include the above noted features as well as other benefits described, illustrated and claimed hereafter.

Whatever the precise merits, features and advantages of the above cited references, none of them achieve or fulfills the purposes of the present invention. These and other objects are achieved by the detailed description that follows.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides for a system and method for renewing business, professional and personal contacts. The system overcomes time and psychological hindrances to maintaining relationships by automatically selecting whom a user should keep in touch with by displaying such selection(s) to the user. The system comprises a user request, timer module, request processor, search/select module, user preferences, contact list, selected candidates, display module and a display (keep in touch). Furthermore, the system is initiated either manually, via the user request, or automatically, via the timer module. The system searches the contact list for candidates based on predetermined user preferences. In the automatic mode, the system searches the contact list for candidates based on a combination of predetermined user preferences and a time based algorithm.

In either mode, selected candidates are transferred to a selected candidates list. A display module is used to build a "keep in touch" GUI to be displayed to the user and includes a visual display of a candidate's image (if available).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 illustrates an overview of the system architecture.

Figure 2 illustrates a flow diagram for the select module.

Figure 3 illustrates a GUI of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

While this invention is illustrated and described in a preferred embodiment, the device may be produced in many different configurations, forms and elements. There is depicted in the drawings, and will herein be described in detail, a preferred embodiment of the invention, with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered as an exemplification of the principles of the invention and the associated functional specifications of the materials for its construction and is not intended to limit the invention to the embodiment illustrated. Those skilled in the art will envision many other possible variations within the scope of the present invention.

Referring now to the drawings, figure 1 illustrates a schematic overview of the invented system architecture **100** that provides as an output a suggested candidate to make contact with. The system is employed either manually, via user request **108**, or automatically, via timer module **110**. In the manual mode of operation, the user requests the system to select a possible candidate(s) from contact list **104**. In the automatic mode of operation, a time reference (i.e. special dates such as birthdays, anniversaries, etc.), which is pre-stored in user preferences **102**, initiates the selection cycle. A time reference includes such things as making contacts in a specified period (e.g. daily for business contacts, weekly for friends or monthly for family, etc.) or with a calendar function (e.g.

two weeks from a previous meeting - i.e. follow-up). With a calendar function, frequency can change if an individual is involved in certain activities, e.g. notify the individual every day with a contact when she/he is on vacation or notify the individual of a contact that she/he hasn't seen in the longest/shortest period of time. Upon reaching the time reference, the system automatically selects a possible candidate(s). Search/Select module **114** determines the specific candidates, including the number of candidates, to be selected from contact list **104** based on user preferences pre-stored in **102**. Selections are based on various algorithms, some possible choices include:

- *Random Selection Algorithm.* Determine the number of eligible contacts (e.g., all the contacts, just the personal ones, or just the professional ones). Use a random number generator to produce a number between 1 and the number of eligible contacts. Use this random number as an "index" into the eligible candidates. Do this up to the maximum number of candidates desired.
- *Time Algorithm.* Select candidate based on time criteria — longest time since last contact, shortest time since last contact.
- *Remind Algorithm.* Select candidate based on special dates such as birthdays and anniversaries.
- *Profitable Algorithm.* Select candidate based on value criteria.

Note: algorithms can take into account these additional preferences:

- *Locale.* Find contacts within a certain locale. For example, an individual lives in San Jose and is interested in local contacts. Or an individual will be visiting New York and is interested in contacts located in New York.

- *Activity.* Frequency can change if individual is involved in certain activities. For example, notify the individual every day with a contact when he/she is on vacation.

Other algorithms could be used without departing from the scope of the present invention. A list of selected candidates is then stored in "Selected Candidates" - **106**, this information is then transferred to display module **116** which is used to build a "keep in touch" display **118** on user screen.

Contact list **104** contains information about possible contacts. Examples include, but are not limited to: name; organization; work address and phone numbers; home address and phone numbers; e-mail address, pager, and cellular numbers; image; personal or professional identifier; special dates such as birthdays and anniversaries; and contact dates such as scheduled meeting and last time met. The data can be organized as a database table, with one row for each contact, and with that row, a column for each attribute (e.g., name, organization, phone number). Or the contact list could reside in the file system, with one file for each contact or one file for all the contacts.

Note: *value* could be an additional field for a contact. This would indicate the value of the contact to your potential profitability — for example, a hot lead. Also personal or professional identifier could have a finer granularity (e.g., friends or family, close personal friend or social acquaintance).

User preferences **102** are setup by the user or by default settings. The user is asked if they would like to set preferences. The preferences include, but are not limited to, the following information: professional or personal contact; automatic or manual invocation; if automatic how

often (time-based frequency of contact); select algorithm; maximum number of candidates to select; locale or activity. If the user decides to set preferences, then any preferred item from the contact list or combination thereof is considered in selecting a candidate/contact. If the user decides not to set preferences, then a set of default settings are considered. Possible defaults include, but are not limited to:

- *All contacts are eligible contacts*
- *Both automatic and manual invocation are allowed*
- *Frequency of a month*
- *Random Selection Algorithm*
- *Maximum number of candidates is 1*
- *No particular locale*
- *No change in frequency due to activity*

As previously discussed, the present invention allows either manual or automatic modes for selecting candidates. In an automatic mode, the user input time reference of frequency of contact is considered to cycle the automatic selection process. The cycle period, in one embodiment, is a predetermined time period of contacting a business associate or time elapsed since a previous meeting. An electronic calendering system, in one embodiment, can work in conjunction with the timer and search/select modules to provide data on previous and future meetings with contacts. With the aid of the search/select module **114,** (full description provided below) a number of candidates to select is chosen. The steps taken in the selection process depend on the algorithm chosen. An example using the Time Algorithm with no preferences is as follows:

- Find all contacts within the designated locale (e.g., San Jose) and create a result set. (See

SQL query below).

- From the result set, find those contacts that are personal and create a new result set. (See SQL query below).
- Order the new result set based on time since last meeting.
- Select the maximum number of candidates with the longest time since last contact and add to the candidate list.

The selected candidates from the contact list are transferred to the selected candidates list **106** and then to display module **116** which is used to build keep in touch display **118** on screen **300**. In a Web (WWW) embodiment, the display module could build the "keep in touch" section using HTML (Hypertext Markup Language). For each candidate selected:

- Candidate record is accessed.
- Name and image from candidate record are retrieved.
- Name and image are added to the display format (e.g., HTML tags are created for the name and image for the "keep in touch" section; these tags are then added to the overall form).

After all the candidates are processed:

- The GUI containing the "keep in touch" section is then displayed (e.g., the HTML tags are written to standard output).

If the user decides not to set preferences, reasonable predefined defaults, as described above, are provided by the system.

Referring to figure 2, the basic selection algorithm first determines if a selected candidate count is less than a maximum, i.e. a count of the number of candidates to be output for display. If

the count is not below a maximum and a candidate has been selected **204**, then the image and other essential contact information, i.e. name are forwarded to the display. If the count is below the maximum, the selection process continues in a selection loop until all the candidates have been selected. The loop comprises: determining if more candidates are available **208** and searching the contact list based on a specified algorithm **210**. If the candidate meets the user preferences **212**, then the candidate is added to the selection list **214** and the count is incremented **216**. If no candidate met the user preferences, the selection returns to the recognition of the count step **202**.

Figure 3 illustrates a screenshot as might be found on a typical PC display. The display **300** includes various objects as typically found in an electronic organizer. The objects include, but are not limited to: a calendar function **302**, date and time information **314**, events **304** (such as meetings, flights, etc.), "to do" lists **306**, a journal **308**, and reminders **310**. According to the present invention, an image of a selected candidate is displayed **312**. In addition to the image, in alternative embodiments such information such as name, specifics of last meeting (e.g. date, location, other attendees) are displayed. The user selects the image to display the contact information and proceeds to make contact, i.e. arrange a meeting, e-mail, telephone, etc. In a Web (WWW) embodiment, a URL is associated with the image/name. In one embodiment, clicking on the URL would bring up a Web page containing the contact information. In another embodiment, making a selection would activate a URL, which triggers actions including, for example, e-mail.

The above described functional elements are implemented in various computing environments. For example, the present invention may be implemented on a conventional IBM PC

or equivalent, multi-nodal system (e.g. LAN) or networking system (e.g. Internet, WWW). All programming, GUIs, display panels and dialog box templates, and data related thereto are stored in computer memory, static or dynamic, and may be retrieved by the user in any of: conventional computer storage, display (i.e. CRT) and/or hardcopy (i.e. printed) formats. The programming of the present invention may be implemented by one of skill in the art of general, graphics or object-oriented programming.

CONCLUSION

A system and method has been shown in the above embodiments for the effective implementation of renewing business, professional, and personal contacts While various preferred embodiments have been shown and described, it will be understood that there is no intent to limit the invention by such disclosure, but rather, it is intended to cover all modifications and alternate constructions falling within the spirit and scope of the invention, as defined in the appended claims. For example, the present invention should not be limited by software/program, computing environment, specific computing hardware of specific algorithms. In addition, the specific chosen selection methods are representative of the preferred embodiment and should not limit the scope of the invention.

CLAIMS

1. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user comprising the following steps:

retaining user preferences;

retaining a list of possible contacts; said list comprising at least identifying information and available images of said contacts;

searching said list of possible contacts to select a potential contact based on said user preferences,

retaining potential contacts selected during said search, and

displaying to the user an available image or other identifying information of a potential contact.

2. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user, as per claim 1, wherein said user preferences comprise either preferences input by the user or pre-selected default preferences.

3. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user, as per claim 1, wherein said user preferences comprise any of: professional or personal contact, automatic or manual preference on initiating the searching step, time-based references, select algorithms, and maximum number of candidates to select.

4. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user, as per claim 1, wherein said list of contacts further comprises any of: name, organization, work address, home address, telephone numbers, pager numbers, cellular numbers, e-mail address, personal or professional identifiers, special dates, and contact dates.

5. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user, as per claim 1, wherein said searching step is initiated either manually by the user or automatically by a time-based reference in the user preferences.

6. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user, as per claims 3, wherein said time-based reference comprises any of: frequency of contact, time between contacts or calendar-based contact.

7. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user, as per claim 5, wherein said automatic initiation of said searching step comprises: comparing applicable time-based references stored in said user preferences with a timer module, and upon a positive comparison, initiating said search step.

8. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user, as per claim 1, wherein said selection of a potential contact in said search step is either random or based on a select algorithm.

9. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user, as per claim 1, wherein said search step is repeated until a maximum number of candidates for selection has been achieved.

10. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user, as per claim 1, wherein said displaying step further comprises insertion of said contact image or identifying information into a GUI.

11. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user, as per claim 10, wherein said GUI comprises an electronic organizer.

12. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user, as per claim 1, wherein said method may be implemented locally or remotely on one or more computer-based systems, across networks or existing communication mediums.

13. A computer-based method of dynamically presenting potential contacts to a user, as per claim 12, wherein said across networks element comprises any of LANs, WANs, cellular, Internet or Web-based networks.

14. A computer-based system for dynamically selecting possible contacts, said system comprising:

user preferences stored in computer storage;

a contact list stored in computer storage, said contact list comprising at least identifying information and available images of said contacts;

a manual request unit;

a time-based request unit;

a display module;

a search module, said search module determining the candidates to be selected;

a request processor, said processor detecting an invocation output from said manual request unit or said time-based request unit and initiating said search module to select one or more possible contacts, and

wherein said selected candidates are stored in computer storage and processed to display, by said display module, said selected contact image or information to the user.

15. A computer-based system for dynamically selecting possible contacts, as per claim 14, wherein said user preferences comprise either preferences input by the user or pre-selected default preferences.

16. A computer-based system for dynamically selecting possible contacts, as per claim 14, wherein said user preferences comprise any of: professional or personal contact, automatic or manual preference on initiating the searching step, time-based references, select algorithms, and maximum number of candidates to select.

17. A computer-based system for dynamically selecting possible contacts, as per claim 14, wherein said list of contacts further comprises any of: name, organization, work address, home address, telephone numbers, pager numbers, cellular numbers, e-mail address, personal or professional identifiers, special dates, and contact dates.

18. A computer-based system for dynamically selecting possible contacts, as per claim 14, wherein said time-based reference comprises any of: frequency of contact, time between contacts or calendar-based contact.

19. A computer-based system for dynamically selecting possible contacts, as per claim 16, wherein said automatic initiation of said selection by said search module comprises: comparing applicable time-based references stored in said user preferences with said timer module, and upon a positive comparison, initiating said search.

20. A computer-based system for dynamically selecting possible contacts, as per claim 14, wherein selection of a possible contact is either random or based on a select algorithm.

21. A computer-based system for dynamically selecting possible contacts, as per claim 14, wherein said one or more contacts are obtained by repeated execution of said search until a maximum number of candidates for selection has been achieved.

22. A computer-based system for dynamically selecting possible contacts, as per claim 14, wherein said displaying further comprises insertion of said contact image or identifying information into a GUI.

23. A computer-based system for dynamically selecting possible contacts, as per claim 22, wherein said GUI comprises an electronic organizer.

24. A computer-based system for dynamically selecting possible contacts, as per claim 14, wherein said system may be implemented locally or remotely on one or more computer-based systems, across networks or existing communication mediums.

25. A computer-based system for dynamically selecting possible contacts, as per claim 24, wherein said across networks element comprises any of LANs, WANs, cellular, Internet or Web-based networks.

26. An article of manufacture comprising a computer media product implementing a process for selecting and presenting to a user possible candidates for contact comprising computer programmable code implementing:

retaining default or user selected preferences;

retrieving a list of possible contacts; said list comprising at least identifying information and available images of said contacts;

selecting a number of possible candidates to be presented;

identifying a specific method of possible candidate selection;

manually or automatically initiating a search for one or more possible candidates based on said user preferences, available candidates and method of selection, and

wherein said one or more candidates are presented visually to the user as a suggestion for contact.

27. An article of manufacture comprising a computer media product implementing a process for selecting and presenting to a user possible candidates for contact, as per claim 26, wherein said user preferences comprise any of: professional or personal contact, automatic or manual preference on initiating the searching step, time-based references, select algorithms, and maximum number of candidates to select.

28. An article of manufacture comprising a computer media product implementing a process for selecting and presenting to a user possible candidates for contact, as per claim 26, wherein said list of contacts further comprises any of: name, organization, work address, home address, telephone numbers, pager numbers, cellular numbers, e-mail address, personal or professional identifiers, special dates, and contact dates.

29. An article of manufacture comprising a computer media product implementing a process for selecting and presenting to a user possible candidates for contact, as per claim 26, wherein said automatically initiating a search is based on a time-based reference in the user preferences.

30. An article of manufacture comprising a computer media product implementing a process for selecting and presenting to a user possible candidates for contact, as per claim 29, wherein said time-based reference comprises any of: frequency of contact, time between contacts or calendar-based contact.

31. An article of manufacture comprising a computer media product implementing a process for selecting and presenting to a user possible candidates for contact, as per claim 29, wherein said automatically initiating a search comprises: comparing applicable time-based references stored in said user preferences with a timer function, and upon a positive comparison, initiating said search.

32. An article of manufacture comprising a computer media product implementing a process for selecting and presenting to a user possible candidates for contact, as per claim 26, wherein said selection of a possible contact in said search step is either random or based on a select algorithm.

33. An article of manufacture comprising a computer media product implementing a process for selecting and presenting to a user possible candidates for contact, as per claim 26, wherein said search step is repeated until a maximum number of candidates for selection has been achieved.

34. An article of manufacture comprising a computer media product implementing a process for selecting and presenting to a user possible candidates for contact, as per claim 26, wherein said presenting visually to the user step further comprises insertion of said contact image or identifying information into a GUI.

35. An article of manufacture comprising a computer media product implementing a process for selecting and presenting to a user possible candidates for contact, as per claim 34, wherein said GUI comprises an electronic organizer.

36. An article of manufacture comprising a computer media product implementing a process for selecting and presenting to a user possible candidates for contact, as per claim 26, wherein said process may be implemented locally or remotely on one or more computer-based systems, across networks or existing communication mediums.

37. An article of manufacture comprising a computer media product implementing a process for selecting and presenting to a user possible candidates for contact, as per claim 36, wherein said across networks element comprises any of LANs, WANs, cellular, Internet or Web-based networks.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A system and method for renewing business, professional and personal contacts is described. The system overcomes time and psychological hindrances to maintaining relationships by automatically selecting whom a user should keep in touch with and by displaying this selection to the user. In an automatic mode, the system searches a contact list for candidates based on predetermined user preferences and a time-based algorithm (e.g. contact each week, month, 2 weeks after a meeting, etc.). Selected candidates are collected and images transferred to a display module to build a "keep in touch" section to be displayed to the user. In a manual mode, the user initiates the selection process.

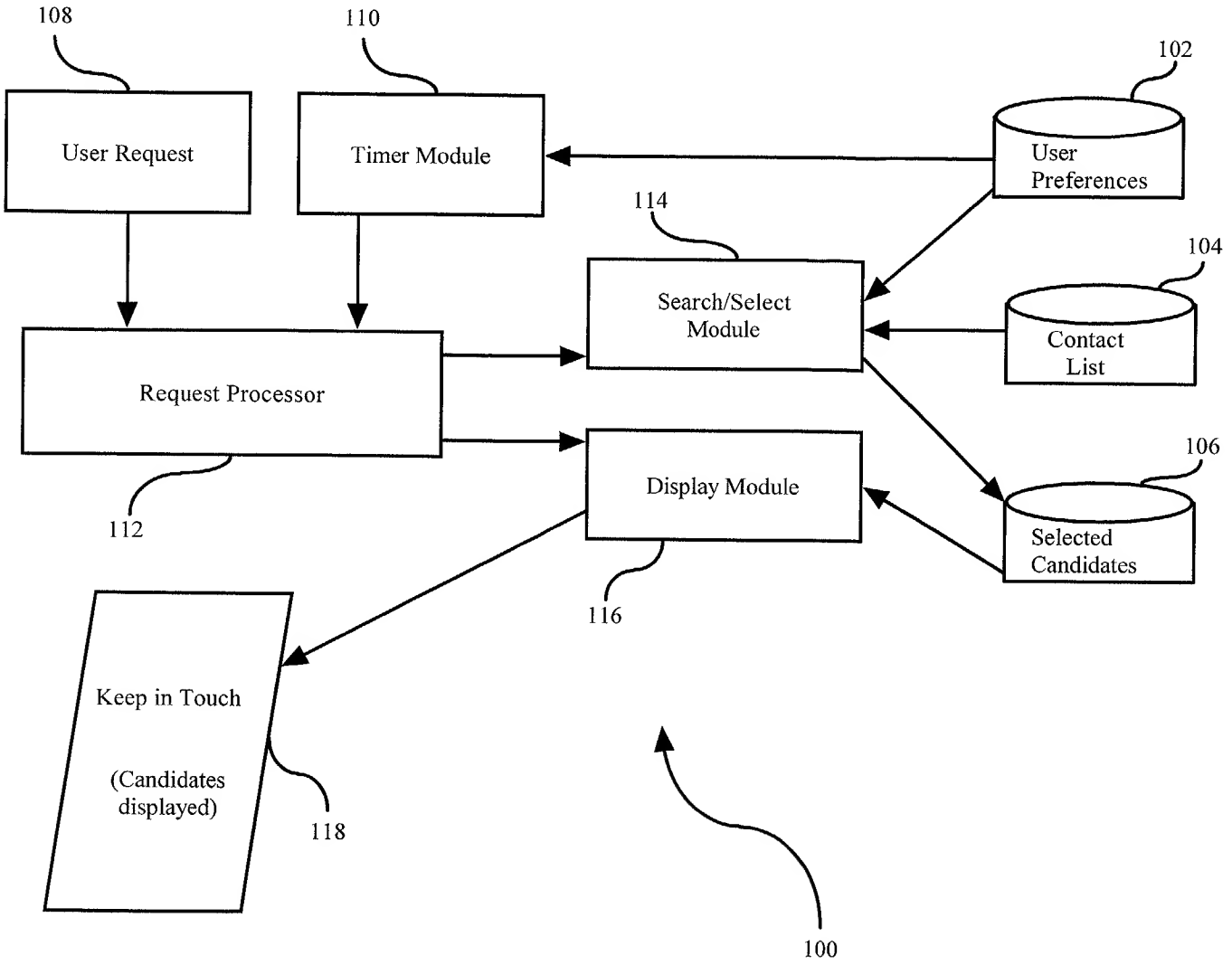

Figure 1

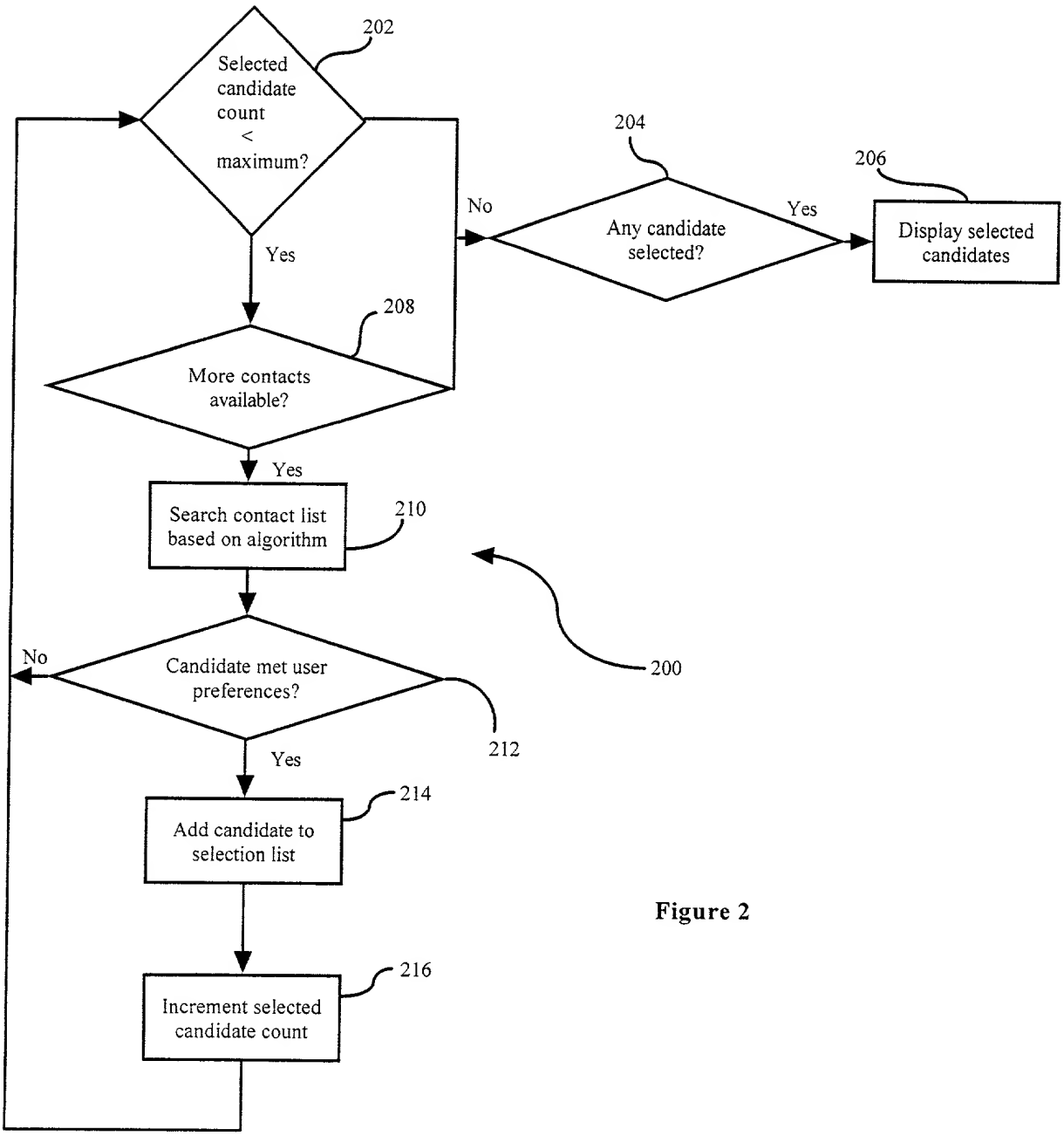
202
Selected candidate count < maximum?
Yes
No
204
Any candidate selected?
Yes
206
Display selected candidates
208
More contacts available?
Yes
Search contact list based on algorithm
210
200
No
Candidate met user preferences?
212
Yes
214
Add candidate to selection list
216
Increment selected candidate count

Figure 2


Calendar
Day
Week
Month
Year
302
tervetuloa welcome
Velkommen Bienvenidos
Willkommen
bienvenue welkom
欢迎 benvenuti
Fri May 14 10:20:52 PDT 1999
314
Events
New
304
09:00 AM Meeting at Almaden with Dan, Stefan, Joann
10:45 PM Flight to Boston, MA
To Do
New
306
Tier One initial research for Cisco
Journal
New
308
Reminders
New
310
Daily
Dilbert
ZDNet
Stocks
Hoovers
Keep in Touch
312
Choose
300

Figure 3

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

DECLARATION FOR PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTOR(S):

Joann Ruvolo, Stefan B. Edlund, and Daniel Alexander Ford

TITLE:

"System and Method for Renewing Business, Professional and Personal Contacts"

DOCKET NO.: AM9-99-0133

TO THE HONORABLE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS:

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled, System and Method for Renewing Business, Professional and Personal Contacts," the specification of which is attached hereto.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and having also identified below any foreign application for patents or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Applications				
			Priority Claimed:	Y/N
Number	Country	Day/Month/Year Filed		

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, § 112. I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the National or PCT international filing date of this application.

Application No.	Filing Date	Status-patented, pending, abandoned
Application No.	Filing Date	Status-patented, pending, abandoned

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

Randy W. Lacasse	(34,368)	Wesley L. Strickland	(44,363)
Richard M. Ludwin	(33,010)	Thomas R. Berthold	(28,689)
Khanh Q. Tran	(41,352)	Marc D. McSwain	(44,929)
Alison D. Mortinger	(39,306)		

Send Correspondence To: Lacasse & Associates
Randy W. Lacasse, Esq.
2001 Jefferson Davis Highway
Suite 806
Arlington, VA 22202

Direct Telephone Calls: (703) 415-1015

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full name of sole or first joint-inventor: Joann Ruvolo
Residence: 6536 Leyland Park Drive, San Jose, CA, 95120, Santa Clara County
Citizenship: US
Post Office Address: Same as above

Date: 2/4/2000 Signature: Joann Ruvolo

Full name of second joint-inventor: Stefan B. Edlund

Residence: 555 E. Washington Ave., Sunnyvale, CA, 94086, Santa Clara County

Citizenship: Sweden

Post Office Address: Same as above

Date: 2/4/00 Signature: ____________________

Full name of third joint-inventor: Daniel Alexander Ford

Residence: 52 Chester Street, Los Gatos, CA, 95032, Santa Clara County

Citizenship: Canada

Post Office Address: Same as above

Date: 2/3/2000 Signature: Daniel Alexander Ford